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DC Comics : Sixty Years Of The World's Favorite Comic Book Heroes



Synopsis

In 1935, popular culture was transformed forever when DC published its first book of all-new, all-original comic material. To the delight of millions of kids everywhere, the modern comic book was born. With the introduction of Superman in 1938, DC Comics made history again, this time with the publication of the first super hero comic book. To this day, the Man of Steel remains the most recognized and celebrated hero in the world. Inspired by its innovative early success, DC went on to create legions of other superheroes--Batman, Wonder Woman, the Flash, Green Lantern, and dozens more of the most popular comic book characters ever created. In the sixty years since the first super heroes were created, the artists, writers, and editors of DC Comics have been developing, refining and extending the reach of their comic book characters. The DC fictional world has branched into a worldwide profusion of entertainment formats: books, toys, movies, radio, television, video games, and an online computer network. Here, for the very first time, is the complete story of America's favorite heroes and their talented, dedicated creators. In over 100 short and spirited essays, author Les Daniels offers remarkable new anecdotes about the company's history, traces the complex genealogies of the characters, describes behind-the-scenes politics that influence the stories, and interviews dozens of artists and writers--the real stars of his engrossing tales. The reader can open the book anywhere and become immersed immediately in the fantasy world of high adventure and magical mayhem.

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Customer Reviews

Daniels (Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics, LJ 10/1/91) has produced

an institutional history, and as such it is fatally flawed. Far too much space is spent on the recent Batman and Superman films, television series, and marketing schemes, while the revolutionary Neil Adams Green Lantern/Green Arrow series merits a mere two pages. The Teen Titans, DC's answer to the popular Marvel X-Men, gets short shrift as well. Despite the terrific reproductions of art and novelty items (including a 1954 book entitled *The Adventures of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis*), this will prove nostalgic for those who have thrown out their comics, but of little use to collectors or students. In contrast, Harvey's (*The Art of the Funnies*, LJ 8/94) scholarly study ignores corporate boundaries and attempts to situate the comic book in terms of its evolution from the comic strip to the world of publishing as a whole. Comic books became an entrenched medium during World War II, when they were popular with soldiers who enjoyed the often lurid, sexy detective stories as well as the comparatively cleaner Westerns and superheroes. Harvey details the sea change brought upon comics by the institution of the Comics Code in 1954, which put horror and detective stories out of business and ushered in the primacy of superheroes. He also engages in close, critical readings of the art itself, focusing on the development of the vocabulary of panel, layout, story, and style, and the relationship between writer and artist during various stages of comic book history. In addition, he pays close attention to the masters, including Will Eisner (who merits only two mentions in Daniels's book), Gil Kane, Frank Miller, and Robert Crumb. The reproductions are ample and illustrate the points made in the text, not the other way around. Highly recommended for collections in popular culture and the history of publishing. Adam Mazmanian, "Library Journal" Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A little mouse whispered into my ear that this book was what my grandson wanted . I found it at a great price and it was a hit. He loves it.

Unlike Peter Sanderson's *Marvel Universe*, which is also an oversized coffee table book, Les Daniels doesn't try to create an overview of the DC Universe or dwell on the growth of the major characters. Well, he does, but only for Superman and Batman for the most part. Not that other DC Comics don't rate a mention; even Bob Hope and Jerry Lewis get a bit. The problem with the book, which isn't bad by any means, is that it is broken into two-page sections, with no topic allowed to go beyond that. Therefore, there are copious two-page spreads about Superman and Batman, and other characters are likely to get one. One of those two gets a spread every five or so. I grew up a Marvel zombie, but because of Daniels's choices, I learned more about the Marvel Universe from Sanderson than I learned from Daniels about the DC Universe, and I expected it to be the other way

around. This is not to say Daniels doesn't have valuable information. His material about the founding of DC and much of the Golden Age material is going to be largely new for younger DC readers, who grew up with Action #1 as the most valuable comicbook of all time. I doubt too many people knew about the Golden Age Red Tornado, a hefty homemaker turned superhero who was something like a female predecessor to Marvel's Forbush Man, or certainly dressed that way, and played for comedy. Oddly, aside from showing a two-page spread depicting the Super Powers action figures of the eighties, the better known Silver Age Red Tornado is never mentioned. While Red Tornado is a second-stringer, he's hardly a minor figure in the DC Universe. There is comparatively little on Vertigo, despite its significance, and it perhaps goes into excess on film versions of the DC characters (the only place Congo Bill is mentioned, despite his recent Vertigo treatment). Other characters rating only a few paragraphs or even a mere sentence include Green Arrow, Mister Miracle, Shade the Changing Man, Animal Man, The Spectre, Deadman, The Demon, The Phantom Stranger, The Creeper, Firestorm, even Aquaman! Very little about Brainiac; nothing on The Scarecrow or Mr. Freeze, either. Too little on The Flash and Hawkman. Oddly, even though it notes the Super Powers action figures were designed by Jack Kirby, it doesn't mention whether the Super Powers comicbook series he was deeply involved in in the 1980s was really a toy tie-in or really had to do with the Fourth World (though the two page spread on it said it was never completed, it still made no mention of Super Powers other than the action figures). Perhaps because DC had to restructure its continuity so many times and say certain stories never happened, or were at least part of an eradicated timeline (they happened, but the world itself was revised through a crossover paradox, negating that they happened) that Daniels took this treatment. Perhaps he was trying to be more commercial. But two page spreads on Superman food products, Batman food products, ephemera for each, is a little excessive considering what was chosen to be left out, even if these two ARE more commercial. At this time, I don't know that there is a better alternative to this book regarding the DC Universe. None of what is here is bad, but some of the choices leave a lot to be desired. Great coffee table book for the DC fan, but one is unlikely to learn much about the characters of the past 30-40 years that isn't going to be well known to them.

"DC Comics : Sixty Years of the World's Favorite Comic Book Heroes" is a nice tribute to the company that has given us some of our most recognizable and long lasting fiction characters. Superman, Batman and Wonderwoman are as much a part of Americana as Mickey Mouse, Coca-Cola and Moby Dick. A blend of art and cheap entertainment, the comic book has evolved throughout the decades, as have the heroes within. The history of this company is laid out from the

beginnings of the comic book, to the debut of the long-running Action Comics (Superman) and Detective Comics (Batman). Each of the company's successive stages is detailed, the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, and the Modern Age. Familiar rivals, such as Plastic Man, Captain Marvel and the Charleston and Quality heroes are shown. Frank Miller and Alan Moore are given their just due. Superheroes in film and on television are shown. The pages contain great photographs and reprints of classic comic culture. It is nice to see the classic covers of the years in high quality reproductions. A cavalcade of toys, badges, trinkets and other tie-ins are displayed. All in all, this is a great book for DC comics fans.

The modern comic book came to life with "Superman." Since the "man of steel" burst on the scene more than 60 years ago, there has been an onslaught of underwear-clad superheroes, many of the more legendary ones under the DC banner. All of the company's major titles and their respective print and filmed versions are featured here, from the "Batman" serials of the 40's to the updated 90's television series "Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman." For anyone with a passing interest in comics as an entertainment and art form, this is a lavishly illustrated and comprehensive work. In sequential order, we get the full history of DC from its humble beginnings to its status as one of the premier companies in its field. Marvel may have overtaken it in the 60's with its more "adult" characters, DC still reigns as the originator of the comic book and the book supremely showcases that status.

What is the link between Dante and DC ? Many of you are going to laugh about that question. Although DC is responsible of creating and evolve a universe for the last 65 years. A universe of Gods Humans and Super humans. A universe full of hope, full of despair. DC creates entities that keep us company for many years and they became parts of our life. And this is not only an American thing. This is a Universal phenomenon. Here in Greece that impact is even greater since Greece is the birthplace of Tragedy (hopes and despair). And Tragedy was given by gods using Pandora's Box. That is Divine. And why Comedy? Do not forget the etymological meaning of "Comic". Its always Comedy. That is the reason for buying this book, to learn (or to remember) about that beautiful universe that make every one of us a little more humans that make us Super Humans.

A very good history, covering all the major characters up to when it was published, as well as the various tv and movie ventures. It even throws in a few merchandising samples, that may well be of

interest to the hardcore collector type. A definite must have reference material for the DC fan with an historical interest.

Reading this book is like going back in time and revive the whole new world of comics in the 30's. From the beginning of the begin. Everything before Superman creation and beyond. It is a very nice reference book for those who love comics and mass media.

This book is great, I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. I also loved the format of short 1-2 page essays, instead of one long read. Also, it makes it easier for the sequel: (DC Comics: Sixty MORE Years of the World's Favorite Super Heroes)

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